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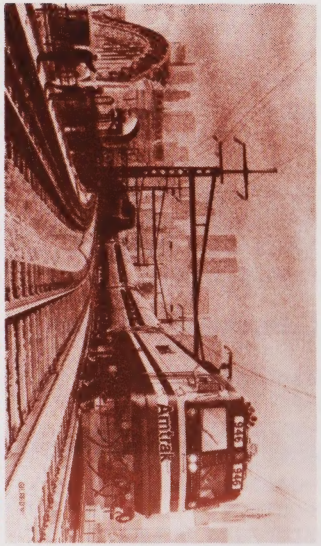
RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

80¢

VOL. 12 NO. 22
DECEMBER 1982
ISSUE NO. 258

TAKE AMTRAK FROM JANUARY TO DECEMBER.



Amtraks' Boston-bound AEM-7, powered new England Metroliner passing the museum-bound GG-1 on the historic Hell Gate Bridge.

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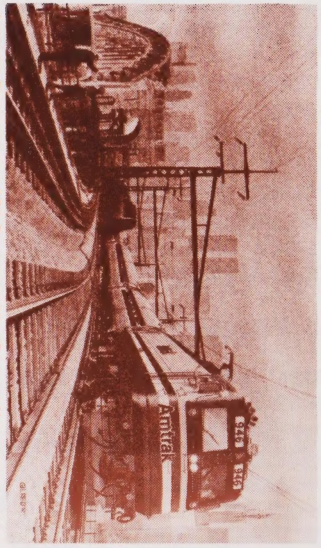

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LETTERS

(Regarding item on the Georgia Railroad in RTN #255, page 18:)

Until recently the GA was owned by an Augusta bank which was the surviving corporation of the state's 1833 charter to build the 171-mile, Atlanta-Augusta line (with branches). Since early this century the line has been operated in conjunction with the ACL and the L&N. These three roads, along with the similar A&WP and the WofA, had a complex structure of ownership and operations among themselves.

Some time ago the L&N began to assert greater operational control over the GA, and the line actually became part of the L&N Atlanta Division. The A&WP/WofA also seemed to blend into the L&N. During this period, and preceding it, the SCL conglomerate either owned the railroads' assets or leased them from the Augusta bank.

On Nov 4, 1982 SCL formally purchased all railroad assets, except unrelated real estate, from the bank. These assets included additional stock in the A&WP/WofA. The GA was transferred to the SCL Florence Division, and the SCL immediately applied for discontinuance of mixed train service on the GA. The SCL contended that the train was unutilized--a fact not contested by passenger rail supporters, given its unbelievable farce of service--and that operation of the train caused increased expenses on days when traffic would not justify the train. (There is usually more than one train per day in each direction.) Also, the SCL claimed that the property tax exemption granted the GA in return for passenger service did not make the transition of ownership. The Georgia PSA held a hearing on Dec 9 which was continued to Jan 13, 1983.

Of course, all these roads will be officially merged into the Seaboard System Railroad, which will have essentially all the stock of the original roads.

Charles L. Till, Jr.
Atlanta, Georgia

Duane W. Roller's account of the initial run of the INTERNATIONAL (RTN 255) was a most interesting report of the startup of the new Chicago-Toronto service by Amtrak and VIA.

However, Amtrak's claim that the new eastbound time of 10 hr, 25 min is the fastest ever for this run is incorrect! I checked back in my file of CNR public timetables and found that the peak schedules were those of 4-26-64, which showed the time of the old INTERNATIONAL LIMITED to be 10 hours flat westbound and 10 hr 5 min eastbound.

Of course old CN trains 14 and 15 were overnight services and so it might be fairer to make a comparison with the best daytime trains of 1964--the INTERCITY LIMITED No. 17 and MAPLE LEAF No. 20. These trains took 11 hr 20 min and 11 hr 45 min respectively over the slightly longer route thru Stratford. However, by close connections at London, the day times were cut to 10 hr 45 min (better than the present 10:52) and 10 hr 55 min respectively via the present route thru Woodstock.

Donald M. Steffee
Brooklyn, New York

(Mr. Steffee says he's engaged in a longterm project of checking out the fastest rail times ever between pairs of cities thruout the U.S. and Canada, and offers to check out any questions readers may have about fastest times ever by rail.)

ON THE COVER

See page 12 for explanation of front cover photograph.

(Rear cover:) This ad for the Amtrak calendar marks the first appearance of a paid Amtrak ad in RTN.

This will clear up the mystery of the film dates for the "Great Railway Journeys of the World" program called "Coast to Coast USA" (see last issue, p. 16). My business car "Pennsylvania" was used by the BBC, attached to the rear of the BROADWAY New York-Chicago, so I was there.

The move was New York-Harrisburg on Oct 22, 1979, layover in Harrisburg, and then Harrisburg-Chicago Oct 23-24. The BBC group continued west the next day, altho I did not accompany them.

George A. Pins
New York, New York

(The narrator of the show also mentioned that the Borie cutoff in Wyoming on the SF ZEPHYR route had just gone into use, which was in Oct 1979.)

★ TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY LEWIS RESIGNS

The Secretary of the Federal Department of Transportation, Drew Lewis, on Dec 28 announced that he would leave his cabinet post effective Feb 1 and would take a position in industry, as chief executive officer of Warner Amex Cable Communications, Inc. Lewis was praised in the press for his accomplishments, and he was called the most effective DOT Secretary to date. He was also lauded for his political acumen. His most recent achievement was to bring the new 5¢ per gallon gasoline tax measure to fruition. Another of his achievements noted in the press

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was his maintenance of airline flights during the difficult air controller's strike in 1981. Lewis was said to have become almost friendly toward Amtrak, a situation which seemed to spring from his first acquaintance with Superliner equipment at an Amtrak Family Days exhibit, and from a pleasing westward trip on the Superliner-equipped EMPIRE BUILDER. Undoubtedly his letting up pressure on Amtrak was also largely due to his realization of the strong political support for passenger trains in the U.S. Lewis said he might stay on somewhat longer than Feb 1 if a replacement has not been found by then.

RAIL CANADA

VIA RAIL CANADA'S corporate holiday greeting card this year pictured the scene at right, a painting by artist Bob Marchessault entitled "Matapedia River Frozen Over, from the OCEAN." The OCEAN, VIA trains 14 & 15, runs between Montreal and Halifax. The greeting card subject, an impressionist painting in mostly shades of brown and tan, may have been inspired by Amtrak's successful use of scenes from train windows in an award-winning series of advertisements. Also, the use of paintings of Canadian scenes by Canadian artists is popular as postage-stamp subjects in Canada.

A READER COMMENTS on the LRC story by M.R. Stefan in our last issue (in which his train was late due to an 80mph speed limit and the connecting train was not held): "It is CN and not VIA which causes the service disruption. They will do just about anything to get rid of passenger service. If there are problems with the LRCs at speeds over 80mph, why didn't they find out about them when they (CN) tested them for Amtrak and VIA? Instead of telling off the conductor and stationmaster, Mr. Stefan should have called CN headquarters in Montreal. If a train is held at Toronto, CN has decreed that it will take no responsibility for its on-time arrival, so two trains would be late. Let's face it: CN is the SP of Canada and behaves as if it is a private stock company rather than owned by the Canadian people."

"ONE JUSTIFIABLE CRITICISM of VIA", writes the same (knowledgeable) reader, is that it is dominated from top to bottom by former CN employees. The unions kill thru service in the corridor, and an all-stainless steel consist on the CANADIAN. Why? They need to clean and repair things at Toronto in order to keep members of the union employed. They can repair Budd-built RDCs at Toronto, but not Budd-built stainless steel cars! In the summer, tours are reported sold out by VIA, when in fact there are fewer than a dozen people on them. What VIA needs is a general housecleaning of all ex-CP and CN employees who cannot or will not run a modern, integrated railroad. Also, VIA will have to sue CP and CN to get their trains to run on time, and that is all but impossible if former employees of those roads dominate the corporate structure. There is a general feeling

at VIA that if it should be belly-up they would go back to working for the CP or CN, so why rock the boat? Perhaps Transport 2000 should attack CP and CN, as well as VIA, for late and non-connecting trains."

THE NEW "INTERNATIONAL" on Nov 24 was running both sets of Tempo equipment because some intoxicated Canadian football fans pulled the brakes and flattened $50,000 worth of Amfleet wheels. Mrs. Kay Krupa was riding the train on Nov 27 doing a marketing study for VIA. The questionnaire was described as a "veritable book" asking about what types of service riders would like to have (such as Club car). The train that day ran full the entire distance from Toronto to Chicago, with many people getting on and off at the various American and Canadian stations (no "end-point" mentality there). Riders note that the Tempo equipment has wide windows, decent snack food, and comfortable seats. The one major drawback reported is the harsh riding quality.

VIA'S CURRENT TIMETABLE has reduced the operation of trains 71 and 76 from seven to five days weekly. This may seem minor, critics say, but it is an ominous trend: the first time any reduction in corridor services has been made since VIA's announced buildup several years ago. To be sure, those trains had little patronage (20 passengers were counted on train 71 into Windsor recently), but the move seems indicative that under the present fare structure and quality of service the Canadian corridor is not infinitely expandable.

VIA RAIL CANADA on Dec 16 announced two Churchill Winter Explorer tours to northern Manitoba, departing Winnipeg Feb 13 and 15. On the 6-day tours, passengers spend two days in The Pas, during the annual Northern Manitoba Trappers' Festival. Aboard the train, a gourmet menu will be featured, VIA said, highlighting Manitoba delicacies such as smoked Winnipeg goldeye and roast buffalo. More info can be obtained from VIA or travel agents.

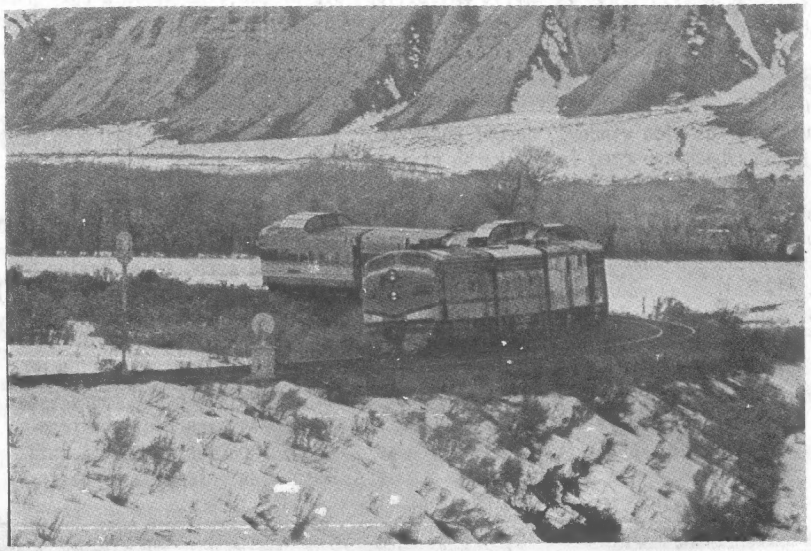
URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

CONRAIL COMMUTER LINES' takeover by local transit agencies in the Northeast has created difficult problems in the transition period, and threats of rail shutdowns. At issue are lines of SEPTA in Pennsylvania, New Jersey Transit, and lines in New York to be taken over by the MTA. Labor negotiations have been the sticky issue. SEPTA decided that it would shut down the lines for two weeks at the start of the new year in order to get things straightened out. However, a class-action suit was filed on behalf of commuters, and a state judge ruled that the transit agency must provide at least limited service during the transition period. Thus, SEPTA agreed to operate trains on the Paoli-Suburban Station line only beginning Jan 1. SEPTA was to run a limited Sunday schedule of about 15 trains each way between those two stations starting at noon on Jan 1 (after a 6pm shutdown on Dec 31), and continuing on that schedule for a number of days until enough crew members could be trained and qualified to operate additional service on the ex-Conrail lines. Adding a further complication to the commuter line takeover was the National Mediation Board's stepping in unasked on Dec 29 to say it would require that the three agencies, SEPTA, NJT and MTA, continue normal operations and that the Board would intervene in the contract negotiations the agencies are undergoing. However, the following day the Board withdrew its plan after complaints from the agencies, particularly from the MTA. NJ Transit's negotiations were reportedly proceeding well. New York's MTA has formed a Metro-North Railroad Company subsidiary to operate the ex-Conrail New Haven, Harlem and Hudson lines. Congress had decreed that local agencies take over the Conrail commuter lines by Jan 1, 1983.

CHICAGO TRANSIT OFFICIALS have chosen a route along 49th Street to Midway Airport for the planned $453 million transit line to Southwest Side, on Dec 27.

SAN FRANCISCO MUNI celebrated its 70th birthday Dec 28, and a subway streetcar breakdown at 6:17am fouled up rush hour commuters.

train of the year



RTN's annual Train of the Year award for 1982 goes to the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR.

Each year the editors of RTN select the train that in their opinion has contributed the most to American rail travel thru such means as patron interest, increased ridership or some innovation that promotes better train travel.

The RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR is long overdue for such an award, for year after year it continues to provide the kind of superb, traditional service that veteran train riders have come to expect in the best of trains. The train continues to delight railfans and to show to those who are new to the rails the amenities that make train travel worthwhile and the most pleasureable of means of travel.

The fact that the train has, at least at times, been run somewhat reluctantly by the Rio Grande Railway does not detract from its beauties or from the inspiration it gives to those who pay close attention to the rail scene. One of the most recent paeans it inspired was a television film that was shown during the past year, which reportedly led to increased ridership.

We hope that the RGZ will continue to be what it is, even if, as has been strongly rumored, another railroad (such as the Southern Pacific) should take over control of the Rio Grande.

This is RTN's seventh annual award. Previous awards were: 1976 - LAKE SHORE LIMITED; 1977 - PIONEER; 1978 - SOUTHERN CRESCENT; 1979 - Five hit list trains (FLORIDIAN, HILLTOPPER, LONE STAR, NATIONAL LIMITED and NORTH COAST HIAWATHA); 1980 - Heritage Fleet trains (LAKE SHORE LIMITED, BROADWAY LIMITED, and CRESCENT); 1981 - CARDINAL.

The photo above is by Paul Rayton.

ARE YOU MOVING? If so, do not forget to send RTN your change of address as soon as possible. Do not rely on the Postal Service to continue forwarding your mail. Forwarding is done for a limited time only, and then the Postal Service destroys your forwarding address information, and you are lost to them.

PASSPORT TO YESTERDAY: Riding the Trains of Central America

by John V. Fels

RTN subscribers who have read and re-read Lucius Beebe's "Mixed Train Daily" with growing nostalgia may take heart; that kind of service is still going strong only a couple of hours out of New Orleans!

A late October vacation was our chance to ride three such trains, and the results were overwhelmingly successful. Our first ride was from San Jose to Puntarenas, Costa Rica's number one Pacific port. This is the former Ferrocarril Electrico al Pacifico, now incorporated into FECOSA, Ferrocarriles de Costa Rica.

In "The Old Patagonian Express" Paul Theroux describes this line as superior equipment-wise to the San Jose-Puerto Limon run, but we did not find this to be the case, possibly because there has been an interchange of equipment. Some coaches are labeled "primera," but no distinction is made between cars, and tickets are one price.

The three Puntarenas trains plus one that goes only to Orotina leave from the F.E.P.'s station a mile or so south of the heart of San Jose. It is a station that looks like a station should, and it's easy to imagine first class service 50 years ago before the planes arrived and the highways were paved. Car No. 1, with easy chairs reminiscent of the old parlor cars, and a tiny bar, sits on a siding at the station.

The run to Puntarenas takes about three hours and is undoubtedly the Western hemisphere's greatest travel bargain; the fare from San Jose to Puntarenas is 45 colones, which in October was 90 cents.

The track winds down thru the mountains and affords superb scenery most of the way. There isn't much thru traffic; it is basically a matter of hauling passengers between remote villages not located on the highway. We elected to return to San Jose by buy (two hours) with a slightly higher fare ($1.12).

Most of the guidebooks on Costa Rica tend to emphasize the longer run to the Atlantic as the number one tourist attraction scenery-wise, but the route to the Pacific is pretty spectacular too. It has the advantage of having a terminal that is pretty much a resort town with beaches and hotels.

The Puerto Limon run on the old Northern Railroad of Costa Rica is longer and is spoken of as the great construction job. The most outstanding "down thru the mountains" trip we had ever taken before was the Guadalajara-Manzanillo run on the N. de M., and this easily surpasses it. It took about seven hours, in part because of a landslide that had blocked the tracks, which required a delay while a bulldozer pushed rocks off the rails and a laborer shoveled off the mud. The fare was $1.88.

Costa Rica was, in October at least, the bargain paradise of the world for tourists. With the exception of the lobster and shrimp, entrees in the top-drawer San Jose restaurants rarely exceeded $4.00. The thoroly acceptable national beer runs 46 to 70 cents, and Costa Rican rum is available at 40 to 50 cents.

And the travel bargains aren't limited to the rails. To save time, we flew back to San Jose from Puerto Limon on SANSA, Costa Rica's domestic airline, in an aircraft with seats that resembled nothing so much as those in an aging streetcar and might better be described as padded benches. The fare, $18.00 in December, had dropped to $7.66 in October as a result of inflation.

The Puerto Limon line seems in considerable measure to be two different railroads. Between San Jose and Siquerres, it is diesel-powered and charitably described as ramshackle; between Siquerres and Puerto Limon, it is electrified and a far better-maintained line, the explanation being the vast quantity of bananas being shipped in the coastal area. Leaving Siquerres, our train turned into a pure commuter run, hauling uniformed high school students home to stops half a mile apart.

Our final trip was Puerto Cortes to San Pedro Sula on the Ferrocarriles de Honduras. The passenger cars all bore builder's plates indicating that they were constructed in Honduras in the 1950s, but maintenance since then appeared to be nil. Overall, the equipment seemed a little superior to that in use in Costa Rica (both were better than that on Ferrocarriles de Guatemala in 1976). Coaches on all the Central American lines are open-platformed, and passing from car to car at speed is a challenging task indeed.

Our original intention had been to take the train from San Pedro Sula to Tela, but it doesn't run anymore. There is a bit of mystery we weren't able to resolve in the limited time available. Chiquita Bananas' operations in Honduras are conducted at least in part under the name of Tela Railway Company, and at Baracoa Junction the Puerto Cortes-to-San Pedro Sula train connected with one from Tela to Puerto Cortes hauled by a Tela locomotive with two freight and six passenger cars, all in the yellow paint which appears to be Tela's trademark.

The Honduras railroad does not afford the outstanding scenery the two lines in Costa Rica do. For much of its length it parallels the highway, and where it does not, the view can be succinctly summarized as jungle and more jungle and still more jungle.

Travelers on railroads in the area south of Laredo and north of Panama ought to recognize that except for the aging Pullman equipment on the N. de M., F.C.P., and F.C. Ch. al P., service is at best primitive. Sanitary facilities range from deplorable downward. If Japan's Bullet Train and the TEE runs are the zenith, these are the nadir. For the adventuresome, however, they are a passport to yesterday. One grain of solace to the aficionado is that the trains are not alone in their venerability. Following the train ride from Puerto Cortes to San Pedro Sula, we flew San Pedro Sula-La Ceiba-Roatan in a DC-3 constructed in 1939 with restroom facilities consisting of a seat on an open five-gallon can!

One other note of caution. First class bus service in Mexico is easily the equivalent of or better than that in the U.S. This isn't at all true in Central America; we traveled several times in honorably retired U.S. school buses still in their familiar yellow livery. One still bore above the driver's station a list of what the homeroom teachers would do to misbehaving passengers. And this was on what is probably Hondura's number one tourist route, the highway to the ruins of Copan.

TELEVISION FEATURES THE RAILS

by Jack M. Turner

The train has long been a favorite setting for movies, particularly Westerns with the inevitable pistol-packin' outlaws sticking up the train and making off with mail, Wells Fargo shipments, or crates of guns and ammunition.

Occasionally a suspense thriller or romantic adventure was cast upon the rails --Alfred Hitchcock's classic "North By Northwest" was one--but the coming of the jet age seemed to steal Hollywood's heart as international love affairs replaced romance in the Pullman car. Of course the Western continued to feature the iron horse, but then the 747 might look a little out of place in the late 1800s.

The airline trend was interrupted by the highly successful movie "Silver Streak" and at least one television effort, the ridiculous "Supertrain" show. Soon the airlines again took over as television and Hollywood's sole means of transport in its shows and movies.

Recently, however, the pendulum has once again swung back to railroad travel with trains playing an active role in at least two television programs, a made-for-TV movie, a documentary and a motion picture. Additionally, NBC's "Real People" centered a two-part show aboard the SUNSET LIMITED and EAGLE from Los Angeles to San Antonio and Chicago, and CBS radio did a weekend feature on great train trips.

The TV series set aboard the rails, ABC's "Hart to Hart" and "Fall Guy" both had good intentions but in terms of accuracy made errors in detail that would be obvious to any railfan and probably to any half-aware viewer. "Hart to Hart" showed many interior shots of the train and, as the show progressed, it became apparent that the supposed sleeping car was merely a Hollywood set, as the bedroom had a walk-in closet as large as one might have at home, a bathroom of extraordinary size, and hall doors that could be locked when the occupants were out (not a bad idea). The room keys looked like some over-sized keys used by lavish hotels on Park Avenue. Exterior shots of the train appeared to be clips discarded in the editing of "Silver Streak", as CP 4070 lettered "AmRoad" led the consist of cars from the CANADIAN. A touch of realism ended the show as the Harts detrained at L.A. Union Terminal and later were shown aboard an Amtrak sleeper on a siding in the mountains.

Meanwhile, "Fall Guy" was set on a Philadelphia-Los Angeles trip which supposedly required a change of trains in Chicago. The show seemed to start off realistically with Philadelphia's 30th Street Station apparently the actual site of filming. Soon, however, a mixture of exterior shots blew the show's credibility, with Amfleet, conventional Amtrak, SP and possibly UP trains used--everything except

the appropriate Superliners! The crowning blow came when Colt Sievers (Lee Majors) got off the sleeper by raising the window (isn't the door easier?) and stepping off at an Indiana station set among mountains in the desert Southwest. Fortuitously, the sleeper from Chicago to L.A. had the same flippant porter and same next-door passenger (Richard Burton) as the Philly-Chicago train. (Good to see the railroad has coast-to-coast porters.)

The CBS movie, "I Was a Mail Order Bride", was letter perfect in its use of railroad details. Valerie Bertinelli portrayed a young magazine reporter writing an article about the romance of the rails, later assigned to investigate mail order romance. Footage of a quasi-abandoned rail yard in Chicago opened the movie and shortly Miss Bertinelli was shown detraining at L.A. Union Terminal. For once, a Superliner train was pictured. Walking thru LAUPT, she commented on the building's beauty and how busy it must have been during World War II as servicemen were moved by train. At the end of the movie, an authentic Superliner sleeper was the setting, and brief glimpses inside two Superliner coaches were presented. The movie closed with F40 #223 leading the train into a tunnel--perhaps at Santa Margarita?

Public Broadcasting's "Nova" series featured Japan's Bullet Train, French TGV, maglev efforts, Metroliners, and British high-speed efforts in its Dec 14 program, "Tracking the Supertrains." Much of the show centered around the High Speed Rail Congress's visit to Japan, but also offered a technical explanation of the maglev concept, an interview with the Budd Company's president aboard an Amfleet Metroliner, and the Mayor of Las Vegas endorsing a maglev train between Las Vegas and L.A. The final portion of the program discussed the proposed L.A.-San Diego Bullet Train and showed many shots of the SAN DIEGANS at San Diego, Del Mar, Oceanside, San Clemente, and Los Angeles. F40 engines 230, 248 and 222 were seen pulling the trains.

"Best Friends", just released by Hollywood, has one segment aboard Amtrak trains from Los Angeles to Buffalo. As Burt Reynolds and Goldie Hawn depart L.A., the train is Superliner-equipped. Several scenes take place in the Superliner sleeper, diner, and lounge, and capture the true essence of train travel: pleasant sleeper accommodations, meals in the diner, friendly fellow passengers, annoying children, difficulties in shaving, and fading sunsets viewed from the back of the rear car. All too soon the 3-day trip ended, but the detail was right as it was a conventional Amtrak train that carried Reynolds and Hawn to Buffalo.

While only time will tell whether Hollywood's rediscovery of the rails continues, it is pleasing to see rail travel spotlighted as each of these presentations showed trains in a favorable manner. No doubt, Amtrak will reap the rewards with a few additional riders. Now if television producers would only endeavor to be more technically correct!

MAGLEV RAIL SYSTEM FEASIBLE FOR MILWAUKEE-O'HARE CORRIDOR

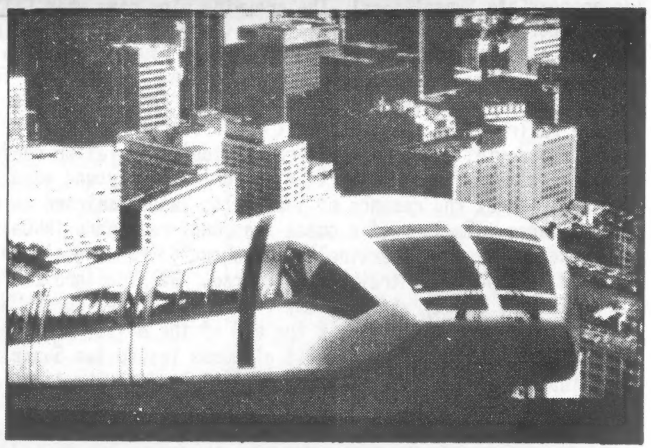
by James Sponholz

A 250mph magnetic levitation transportation system is technically and economically feasible for operation between downtown Milwaukee and O'Hare International Airport, according to a study released Dec 10 in Milwaukee by the Budd Company.

According to Rep. Henry S. Reuss (D.-Wis.), the 79-mile maglev line would carry passengers between the two points in 32 minutes with stops at the Milwaukee County Airport (Mitchell Field), Sturtevant WI and Gurnee IL. Reuss said the line could be in place in time for the 1992 Chicago World's Fair.

The $40,000 study was commissioned last June at the request of Reuss, Milwaukee County Executive William F. O'Donnell, and Wisconsin Governor Lee S. Dreyfus, and was paid for with funds from those three governmental levels and from the Wisconsin Electric Power Company. A similar study is currently being performed by Budd on the Los Angeles to Las Vegas corridor.

The Midwest maglev route would run, according to the Budd study, from the Mil-



The Budd Company's publicity photo of its proposed 250-mph maglev transportation system, shown against a city backdrop.

waukee Amtrak station south along the Milwaukee Road right of way to the stop at the Milwaukee airport. From there the route would continue over the old Chicago, North Shore and Milwaukee interurban right of way, before swinging onto the Chicago and North Western freight line for stops at Sturtevant (for Racine/Kenosha) and Gurnee (for Waukegan and North Chicago). At Des Plaines the route would switch to the Soo Line right of way via a high-speed curve and continue to O'Hare, where it would terminate directly above the new CTA rapid transit extension.

The maglev guideway would run alongside the existing tracks on the rail rights of way, suspended approximately 16 feet off the ground so as not to interfere with rail operations or highway grade crossings.

According to Reuss, the line would serve as a feeder of Mitchell Field air passengers from O'Hare, possibly increasing Mitchell Field use by 2 million passengers annually. Reuss said the maglev could also provide a quick way for Chicago and Milwaukee residents to travel between the two cities using both the high-speed system and the CTA O'Hare extension. Reuss said that Amtrak service on the Chicago-Milwaukee corridor would probably not be able to compete with the high-speed maglev system.

"We're very conscious of Amtrak's valiant job to serve the people of Milwaukee and Chicago, but the fact is that the poor thing has been so (cash) starved and the right of way is so antiquated and the grade crossings so numerous that you can't really operate fast trains," Reuss said.

Construction and vehicle costs for the maglev system are projected to cost $1.2 billion, which Reuss said could be privately financed by a tax-exempt bond issue which would be gradually paid off by fares. Budd estimated preliminary operating costs at $13 million per year.

"(Budd's) economic projections show that we may be able to accomplish something that has never before been accomplished in history--namely, bring into being a new system of transport that provides for its major support on the farebox, on what passengers pay rather than on vast governmental subsidies," Reuss said.

According to William Dickhart, assistant director of Budd's Fort Washington PA Technical Center, projected round trip fares from O'Hare to Milwaukee would be $40. At that figure, Dickhart said, a ridership level of 2.5 million round trips per year would be needed to make the system financially feasible. The Illinois and Wisconsin Departments of Transportation are currently performing a joint study on the maglev, which is due out early in 1983, and which Reuss said would recommend fare structures based on potential ridership figures.

Reuss said that after the joint DOT figures are released, a bi-state authority should be created to implement the plan. According to Reuss, Illinois Gov. James Thompson is enthusiastic about the proposal and has promised his support, as has Wisconsin Governor-Elect Anthony Earl.

"1992 is going to see a large world's exposition in Chicago, with millions of people coming to this part of the country, looking for a place to enjoy themselves, looking for escape," Earl said. "It's appropriate that we begin thinking now how we can attract people from the Chicago area into Wisconsin."

"A system like this one surely is ideal," Earl said. "It would be quick and fast (and) relatively inexpensive."

Reuss also said that the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago has agreed to make an economic impact study over the next six months on the possible effects of the system on the Midwest. Budd officials said that construction of the maglev would create 5000 jobs over a four-year period. According to Reuss, such factors as potential jobs created by the system, methods of finance and effects on the two airports will be examined.

Budd has the exclusive rights to market the maglev system in the Western hemisphere. Budd's sister company, Thyssen Henschel, developed the magnetic levitation technology and will begin high-speed maglev tests this spring at a test track in Emsland, West Germany. Reuss said that he was confident those tests will be successful.

"When the maglev tests over in Germany this spring and summer prove successful, the central part of the U.S. will be in a position to go forward in what could be a transportation development as revolutionary as the railroads in the 1870s, the automobiles in the 20s and the airplane in the 60s," Reuss said.

Maglev , according to Budd's William Dickhart, represents a "quantum leap of technology beyond anything that now runs on wheels and rails."

According to Dickhart, the maglev vehicles are suspended on an elevated guideway, magnetically levitated about half an inch from the guideway sides. There is no friction or metal wear--the only time a maglev touches the guideway is when it is sitting in a station. When electromagnets located in guide arms (which keep the vehicle attached to the guideway) are energized, they are attracted to steel rods in the guideway. The vehicle is then lifted and propelled by magnetic force.

In the event of a power failure, each car carries "emergency landing skids" which Budd officials say would safely slow the car.

"The maglev is in effect an airplane that escapes the hazards of most airplanes by being tied to a rail system (elevated) 16 feet from the ground" Reuss said.

Reuss said that maglev construction costs at $12 to $15 million per mile, compare favorably to the $16 to $24 million per mile tab for other rapid transit and high-speed projects.

ADVENTURES IN NORTHERN MICHIGAN
by Peter Putnam Bretz

The Michigan Northern Railway had to move some passenger cars south. All summer the railroad had been running short excursion trains between Charlevoix and Petoskey MI--16 miles--using equipment that for the most part had been brought up from south state--from SEMTA. So the thought was why not run a big excursion down the line and make a little money as well.

Forlow Travel Corp. of Chicago was contacted and they arranged to bring the people. Forlow has run many well-organized bus tours to the nation's Capitol, to Yellowstone, Banff,etc. This would be their first venture combining bus and train. Originally 200 people were sought, but the thing just mushroomed until about 600 good folks signed up. As a result, 23 motor coaches were employed for the three-day adventure.

Since Northern Michigan is "way up there," we had to get into and ride our buses on a Friday, then take the train over the weekend. This was in October--the 15th, 16th and 17th. "The Fall Foliage Express" was the name of the tour. Most everybody was along to see the fall colors or take a train ride. A few hard-core rail buffs such as ourselves had joined the tour for the singular purpose of "getting new mileage."

Most of the buses left from Chicago, but we found it more convenient to board at Lansing. The Lansing bus station is clean and nice--almost as pleasing as the typical Canadian bus station. Our chartered Greyhound MC-9 pulled in about 9:45am and picked up about 15 people.

We stopped for lunch at Cadillac, going to the Caberfae Lodge and the "Kings Table" restaurant. A nice cold buffet was set up and we all stuffed ourselves. We had to pay extra, but it was worth it. A few hours later we arrived at our destination, Cedar, where we would put up for the night. But due to such a large number of people, the Sugar Loaf Lodge couldn't accommodate all, so the overflow were put up at the Park Place Hotel in downtown Traverse City, about 14 miles away. However, the "wine and cheese get-together party" was out at the resort, and the shuttle buses didn't operate as planned. We finally got to bed late and tired, but anticipating fun and trains tomorrow.

ON THE COVER

The inaugural run of the SILVER PALM arrives in Miami on Nov 20, breaking the ceremonial banner placed in its path. The photo below shows the scene a few moments before that on our cover, as the train nears the intact banner. Coverage of the inaugural runs appeared in RTN no. 256. Cover photo and photo below by George W. Gerhart.

Saturday began as a cold, blustery day, with forecasts of rain and snow showers. One of the scheduled activities this morning was a rail seminar, held at Sugar Loaf. We decided not to attend, because J. David Ingles of Trains Magazine who was to be one of the participants, sent word that he would not be on the trip.

The bus took us on an hour's run to Charlevoix and the train. But then we all had to wait another hour for a boat tour to run. However, due to the wind and the condition of the lake, the tour never took place. We just all wandered around in the cold. A motel was offering cheeses and snacks to us chilly ones, and that was fine. We couldn't walk over to the train because it was too far, so we had to wait for the buses to leave. Why didn't we take the train north from Traverse City? Because the drawbridge across Lake Charlevoix has been out of service for many years.

At last we arrived at trackside. The station was a white, wooden, turreted affair--ex-Pere Marquette. The last regular passenger trains thru here were nos. 27 & 28, discontinued in the early '60s. The C&O continued to run #25 & 26 between Grand Rapids and Traverse City until around 1968; and the summer-only RESORT SPECIAL handled thru Pullmans from Chicago to Petoskey until about 1960. Nevertheless, all this past summer the Michigan Northern has been running four to six roundtrips each Friday and Saturday between Charlevoix and Petoskey.

As the buses unloaded, we checked out the train's equipment: up front (actually coupled to the rear of the train at this point) were three forest green GP-9s, nos. 1603, 1605 and 1606. Then SEMTA cars 4811, 4817 & 4815; Southern Rwy coaches 823 & 829; Amtrak-painted coach 3926, owned by the Lakeshore RR Museum in Erie PA; SEMTA car 4810; GTW 4804; SEMTA 4809; Mich. N. cars 407 "Mackinac" and 404 "City of Petoskey" (both built 1914--in forest green, and with genuine walkover seats and opening windows); and private car "Venice", a 6-bedroom lounge buffet. Forlow Tours maintains the "VenicE", and owner John McGuff was present during the two-day trip.

We hurriedly found our seat in car 407, and we were off and rolling a little after 1:00pm with all 602 paying passengers, 31 train attendants and the private car occupants. In no time at all we were skirting the shores of Little Traverse Bay and then clicking into Petoskey. There the three diesel units ran around the train. We noticed a turntable still in place from the old days.

Presently we began moving in the same direction, with the locomotives pushing the train. We slid past the Petoskey C&O station, with its round, gabled clock tower (the station is now a museum) and headed on up a mile or so to Bay View, where we joined the old Pennsy line (Grand Rapids & Indiana RR) towards Mackinac City. As we stopped by some nice waterfront homes, a lady called out the train window to a couple standing on their back porch: "Oh, what an adorable house! Stay there, we'll be right in for tea."

We turned our flip-top seat, and the train headed south, stopping briefly at the Pennsy's Petoskey station (both lines are now owned by the Michigan Northern). It was here that the Tuscan-red NORTHERN ARROW called, bringing thru Pullmans from Chicago all the way to Mackinac City. That train stopped running in the late '50s. Fifteen miles south, we passed Boyne Falls and saw the remnants of the Boyne Valley RR which once ran tourist trains up to Boyne City on Lake Charlevoix. Along near here we spotted an old abandoned right-of-way grade. A map showed the old line to be the Boyne City, Gaylord and Alpena.

Finishing our box lunch, which was distributed when we boarded, we went forward to explore the train. We met a number of mileage freaks, like us, who were here just to collect new miles. Never mind the power or the equipment, just the trackage, thank you. Most passengers were enjoying the ride and the fall colors. The train, however, was without steam heat. This was due to the lack of boilers on the engines, of course, but also the steam generator car that was to be used checked out bad-ordered at the last minute. Still, the resourceful men of the Michigan Northern came up with kerosene space heaters for every car, so all were warm and toasty--that is, except for a certain open-windowed car where a particular rail buff insisted upon opening the window to lean out and take pictures. (We tried to be considerate, but we just had to get those shots.)

With three bars on the train, it was easy to obtain drinks, which were served in plastic cups that were printed: "Sea Hawks Bay Queen Cruises." Strolling musicians came thru the cars, playing on such instruments as fiddle, banjo, guitar and cimbalette or dulcimer. Outside, occasional snow flurries wafted down--big, fat flakes.

Before we knew it, we were at our destination of Walton Junction. This is 74 miles from North Bay View, and is where the Mich Northern 26-mile branch goes off to Traverse City. We were headed there, but must go by bus. Probably too much

(Right:) At Petoskey, Michigan, the three diesel engines ran around the train to pull it in the opposite direction.

Photos by the author.

The excursion train at the Chessie System (Michigan Northern) station in Charlevoix, Michigan. Car at left is Amtrak-painted car 3926. Train trip began at this location.

would have been involved to get the train up the branch, but it would have been nice. The buses buses were waiting, and everyone piled in.

We got the same Greyhound bus and found mostly the same people. In an hour we were back at the Park Place. But we had to get ready to go over to Sugar Loaf this evening for a big steak fry. Originally this was to be held outdoors at a place called Fife Lake (a couple of miles north of Walton Jct), but due to the threatening weather and lack of space for 600, they opted to hold it at night. We bounced on the bus again to the resort only because the meal was prepaid with our ticket order. It was okay, but a bit of a hassle.

Sunday morning, instructions were to leave our bags outside our rooms by 6am. We struggled awake and got ready, only to have the phone ring at 5:50am. "It's okay, you don't have to get your bags ready until 6:45!" How ridiculous! So we trundled our own stuff downstairs and gave it to the bellman. Then more consternation: our tour guide (whom I nicknamed "Captain Lewis" because of her resemblance to the TV character of that name) was almost in tears because the bus was late. Where was that driver? Finally, the bus showed up, and our tour guide had the driver skedaddle empty up to Sugar Loaf. We knew it would be a while until the coach returned. A continental breakfast, provided by Forlow, was enjoyed, the buses eventually loaded, and we were on our way. "Capt. Lewis" passed out Forlow evaluation sheets and talked about how this was the most mixed-up tour she had ever been on. "But it's Sunday," she cried. "I cannot accommodate the few of you who wanted to go to church, but we can do the next best thing. Let's all sing 'God Bless America!'" And half the busload joined in.

Back at Walton Junction, wheels were rolling at 9:38am. We selected a seat in the wide-windowed Southern coach as a change of pace. It was a bright, sunny day, but crisp and cool. Two gin and tonics later, we arrived at Michigan Northern Rwy headquarters in Cadillac. There was lots of interesting equipment scattered about, including some RS-3 Alcos. We would have enjoyed these engines on our train, but they are out of service.

At this time, Mr. Dan Behr, trip coordinator for the Golden Arrow Tours, which had joint organization of the trip with Forlow, invited us into the cab of a locomotive. A noted mileage enthusiast went with us, along with a railfan and a pretty lady from Kalamazoo. We all stepped out the front car and onto the catwalk of the third unit. We threaded our way along the side of the--by now--slowly moving engine, into the cab and out the front door to the next unit, jumping the short distance between. We all ended up in the cab of the second GP-9, no. 1605. The train didn't get much above 40mph the whole trip, however.

Back in the comfort of our Southern reclining-seat coach, we listened to more dulcimer and fiddle music and ate today's box lunch. This one was finer than

yesterday's. We had croissants filled with cold cuts, cheeses and condiments. Very satisfying. And, "Waitress, I'll have another gin and tonic, please." We were feeling quite well when the music makers launched into the "Orange Blossom Special." What fun! A sing-along.

At Standwood, a helicopter was waiting trackside. An executive-type was picked up from the "Venice" and whisked away. Turned out he was the president of Amway Products, just taking a little train ride. Also along today was John Donovan, president of Forlow Tours. He said that Forlow has great plans to run similar tours soon (watch for announcements).

Presently we stopped at Rockford, Mich. for a short stay. The whole town was decked out for us. A chicken barbecue was offered, as well as discounts from various shops. Lots of folks took advantage of 20¢ ice cream cones. An old Erie Stillwell car, that saw service on the C&WI before coming to Rockford, was on display here.

"Whang, whang!" The 1603 signaled all to get aboard. Then, a mere 8.4 miles later, we arrived at Comstock Park Yards at 3:30pm. This is the end of the Michigan Northern and was the end of our rail trip. Why not go the remaining 5.4 miles into Grand Rapids? Well, it's C&O track, another crew would be needed, and so on. Too bad; this means unconnected mileage for us. We did manage to ride the Pere Marquette thru Grand Rapids years ago, and we just lack the few miles.

"Captain Lewis" ordered us on the bus, and we took off for Lansing. At Lansing there was some thought that we should also stop at East Lansing. Ten of us would find that very convenient. But "Captain Lewis" had the final say, and told us all "no" in a nasty way. But we got a ride to our Best Western University Hotel--right across from the Amtrak station, and next day started for home via the BLUE WATER LIMITED.

Thanks are due to Forlow, Golden Arrow and the Michigan Northern for a really adventurous time in Northern Michigan.

THE RETURN OF THE WATERBURY BUDD CAR

by Robert Underwood

I heard on the radio that on Wednesday, Dec 15 train service would resume between Bridgeport and Waterbury CT after flooding last June had devastated the line between Devon (junction with the mainline) and Derby. Unable to get to Waterbury to ride train 1401's departure at 7:08am, I instead trained from New Haven to Bridgeport and had ample time there before train 1400's departure at 9:25am.

When I reached Bridgeport a small knot of passengers from train 1401 were waiting on the platform. In fact we had been delayed a few minutes by the Budd Car. Track 1, the westbound express track, has been out of service for some time. A self-propelled American Crane was on the drawbridge just east of the old station's platforms. Also, a work train was on track 4, the eastbound local. So for eastbound trains, passengers had to "walk the plank"--the official name of the portable metal platforms to carry passengers from high-level platforms to a train one track away is Bridge Plate.

Train 1334 due at 9:19, finally showed up about 30mins late and crept up to the two bridge plates where passengers detrained and a few boarded. Then Amtrak train 190 came in as train 1334's markers were disappearing in the early morning haze. After train 190 departed about 20mins late, Amtrak SPV 2000 car 994 pulled out of the siding west of the station and up to the bridge plate.

We departed at 9:55, 30mins late. We ran at good speed up the main line and stopped opposite Devon Tower at 10:03. Two minutes later we proceeded east as Amtrak train 169 passed in the opposite direction about 10mins late. The engineer then halted the car and he and the fireman rushed to the other end of the car. Signals changed and switches lined, we then crossed over from track 2 to 1 and 3 and then onto the leg of the Devon "Y". This was new trackage for me, as I don't think I've ever traveled the east leg before.

We proceeded up the branch on track 2 (1 is out of service). At one spot we crept over new fill where there had been a substantial washout. Then we went slow over a new culvert where a small stream goes under the track. This is Turkey Brook, but the brook had become a raging torrent last June. A bulldozer was still working, cleaning up debris.

We arrived at Derby Shelton station at 10:34 after several minutes' delay at the signal where track 2 ends. We were now 48mins late. Of the six passengers on the train, two detrained and one more boarded. There were numerous comments of how nice it was to have the train back. Only one person preferred the substitute bus. At Ansonia we picked up another passenger, then crept thru an alley between old industrial buildings, whistle blowing and bell ringing for the numerous grade crossings.

At Seymour, a little green fiberglass lean-to station, no one detrained nor boarded. On to the lovely old station at Naugatuck. The locals there were out to cheer our arrival. Again, no one on or off. I believe the station is used by the local newspaper, as a large sign wished everyone Season's Greetings from the Daily News.

Whistle toots were exchanged with the B&M local freight in the yards, and we arrived Waterbury at 11:05, 45mins late.

After a short layover, the car departed at 11:18 as train 1403 with 13 passengers. Off and on counts enroute were: Naugatuck 0/0, Seymour 1/3, Ansonia 0/0, Derby Shelton 1/4. Two regular commuters came out on the rear platform to view the flood damage. We proceeded down track 2 against the current of traffic to a signal at a reverse crossover. We stopped there and the signal changed. The conductor gave three buzzes to the engineer, and he backed the car thru the crossover to track 1 and thru another to a siding which I assume is track 3. We stopped clear of the signal and then moved forward onto track 1 and onto the New Haven main line.

At Bridgeport everyone detrained and the car then continues west to Burr Road tower about two miles away, where the crossover is made. The weather was mostly clear with light winds and temperature in the high 40s--a perfect day for a ride on the Waterbury Budd Car. No one thought the car would ever run again.

★ A HIT LIST OF CALIFORNIA TRAINS

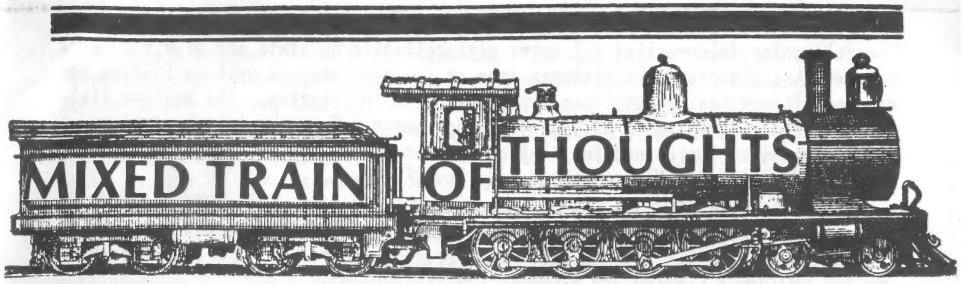
Incoming California Governor Deukmajian's transition team has already made up a "hit list" of Caltrans-funded trains in the state that it will likely seek to discontinue, judging by discussions between transition team members and Caltrans officials. The Deukmajian administration will reportedly aim at the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA, the SAN JOAQUINS, and all of Caltrans's connecting bus service.

At the meetings, Deukmajian's men asked no questions about Caltrans highway projects, and they did not question the rail commuter service. But there was a good deal of interest expressed in the trains and buses mentioned above, indicating that they would be sought after as items to trim from the Caltrans budget in 1983. Both trains have "pretty good" legislative supporters, Caltrans said. What are needed right now are letters to California legislators and officials in support of the trains, pressuring them to retain them in the Caltrans budget, said a Caltrans source. Amtrak would not take over complete responsibility for the SPIRIT if Caltrans was forced to withdraw funding for it. The train might be in a better position if Amtrak had been more generous with it, according to sources. Amtrak had promised Amfleet II diner-lounges for the train, then denied the promise. Slumbercoaches had been considered also, but they were not forcoming. Instead, the most lackluster coaches available have been used on it, and there has been "zero marketing" of the train. (Caltrans has been running a newspaper ad in December that shows a map of the state's rail lines and bus connections and a schedule of the SPIRIT and connections.)

Governor-elect Deukmajian, who seems quite conscious of his Armenian ancestry, might be interested to know that the SAN JOAQUINS serve the largest Armenian population in the Western Hemisphere, in the San Joaquin Valley. Patronage has been quite good, with holiday season consists up to five cars.

Caltrans Director Adriana Gianturco lost her job at the end of December, fired by the pro-highway Deukmajian people. At present, Caltrans is under Acting Director John J. Kozak, a highway man from the Equipment Branch of Caltrans. The permanent director has not been named. Senator James Mills has urged Deukmajian to appoint Robert Nelson, who organized the San Diego Trolley project.

In related news, Caltrans has learned that SAN DIEGAN ridership has been down each month (except Mar & Apr) from May 1981 to Dec 1982, not up as Amtrak previously reported. A SAN DIEGAN discount promotion is to start in January. Caltrans blamed the lowering ridership on fares set too high by Amtrak.



FIRST DOME CAR for the CAPITOL LIMITED may arrive in January, but more likely in February, because of slowness the Beech Grove shops have experienced in getting delivery of curved glass to replace windows in the cars that are being rebuilt into HEP equipment. Amtrak said that the cars are planned to be delivered from the shops one per month thru the month of July, with possibly two delivered in February.....

AMTRAK TOOK DELIVERY a short time ago, presumably in December, of a big four-color offset printing press for its print shop in Washington. As readers will remember, funds were allocated for this some time ago by the Board of Directors. An Amtrak spokesman could not say whether the press will be used to print timetables, but at least one would expect that travel brochures would be done there.....

★ ★ ★

FLORIDA FIRST-CLASS service on Amtrak's Florida trains, which began Dec 12 (detailed last issue), and which includes some innovations such as complementary meals, includes an elegant-appearing folder which is given to first-class passengers upon boarding. Printed on expensive paper, the brown folder features an embossed "First Class" logo which pictures an Amtrak F40 locomotive. Inside the folder are stationery with the same logo, in colors of silver, brown and blue-green. There are also two information folders and a folder requesting comments and evaluations, all topped by the same colorful and elegant logo.....

NEWSPAPERS ARE CRITICIZED occasionally for downplaying the horrible carnage on the nation's highways, which leads to the public impression that highway travel is safe. The New York Times this year did something about the near-blackout of information on car crashes, and on Dec 31 published a summary of all the nation's fatal accidents that involved drunk driving. There were 50 such accidents, killing 54 people. The paper took over two full pages to list and summarize, in gory detail, all these crashes that occurred one year earlier, on Dec 31, 1981. Actually, there were 91 more people that died in highway crashes that day, but drinking was not a factor in them. And, as the paper noted, the 50 drunk-driving accidents that date were really below the daily average--on an average day, 75 people die in drunk-driving accidents! (If it had been an average day, the Times would have needed over three pages for its story, and if all the others killed had been included, the news section would have been almost totally dominated by the story. It's a case of a problem that's so massive that it taxes our ability even to record the outlines of it. The best place to drink while traveling is the lounge car of a good passenger train.).....

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FT. JACKSON ARMY special trains were run by Amtrak again this year, in two sections--trains 880 and 882--leaving Fort Jackson, south of Columbia SC, for New York City on Dec 16 and 17. Return runs will be made after New Year's Day. Similar runs were done last year. Consist of train 880 at New York was: engine 929 (AEM-7); cars 21108, 21238, 20015, 21007, 21237, 21032, 20014, 21034, 21071, and baggage cars 1164 and 1233.....

AMTRAK SKI BROCHURES for this season come in two versions, for East and West. The full-color folders list ski areas alphabetically by state and give the nearest Amtrak station and the distance from it for each one, as well as listing the car rental agencies or bus lines connecting from the station. The Western listing is stretching things a bit in giving Vancouver B.C. as an Amtrak station. It is for an Amtrak bus connection, but not for an Amtrak train. The Eastern version lists a "Bellow Falls VT." Make that Bellows Falls.....

"A SINFUL EXPERIENCE" is what author John W. McDermott calls a transcontinental Amtrak train trip in "How to Get Lost and Found in California--and Other Lovely Places", published for Air New Zealand by Orafa Publishing. On a 3000-mile trip via the SOUTHWEST LIMITED and BROADWAY LIMITED McDermott wrote: "We were relaxed, refreshed... a wonderful, sinful experience".....

SEVERAL TOP MOVIES released this season have included at least brief scenes of Amtrak trains--a really remarkable movie record, as detailed by Jack Turner elsewhere in this issue. In addition to the movies he describes, two other popular films of the moment also include Amtrak scenes: "Tootsie" and "The Verdict"...

★ ★ ★

AMTRAK'S CAPITAL BUDGET for the current fiscal year includes not only the $46 million granted it in the bill reported on last issue, but also about $75 million in capital funds carried over from the previous fiscal year, according to NARP.....

SEPTEMBER RIDERSHIP FIGURES published last issue were depressed somewhat by the 3-4 day railroad strike in September, as OARP Regional Coordinator James H. Stevenson reminds us.....

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA STATION, the ex-L&N and Amtrak facility, last used by the FLORIDIAN, has been taken over by the Sheraton Hotel chain and remodeled. The new Sheraton Riverfront Station, as it is now called, offers 131 rooms starting in price at about $45 per night.....

RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR was annulled due to the blizzard in Denver on Dec 25 and 26.....

THE SAN JOAQUIN, train 709, made a special stop in Shafter CA on Oct 9. On that day the Shafter Historical Society dedicated the ex-Santa Fe depot there as the Shafter Museum, after an extensive restoration. Altho the building is still trackside, it has been moved four blocks north of its original location. The Society arranged for the special stop that day, and an extra car was added for the 161 persons who detrained at Shafter.....

★ ★ ★

THE AMTRAK CRESCENT, starting some time in December, was to have all the cars rear of the diner--the lounge, coaches and sleeper--removed in Atlanta southbound, so the train would carry no lounge between Atlanta and New Orleans. Riders are complaining about this, and also about the positioning of sleepers behind the baggage cars and in front of the coaches, so that first class passengers must walk thru about foru coaches to reach the diner. The consist of the southbound train on Sunday, Nov 28 at Birmingham AL, before the truncating of the train, was engines 259 & 258; cars 1265, 1611, 2993, 2434, 4629, 4632, 4648, 8504, 3102, 4607, 4742, 4715, 2991. (Additional cars carried NY-Washington: 20047, 21225, 21077, 21065.) The train arrived 10 minutes early that day in Birmingham, and as a result several passengers missed it, expecting it to be late.....

AMONG PLEASANT RUMORS circulating about future Amtrak plans is the belief that Amtrak President Claytor will not stop with rehabilitating the domes now planned for several trains east of the Mississippi, but will ask for a refurbished domeliner to run in the West, possibly on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED run.....

PASSENGER LOADINGS NOSEDIVED on Amtrak trains on non-holiday dates after Nov 1, when the $225 Anywhere Fare promotion expired. For example, on Sunday Dec 12 the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR was seen leaving Chicago with only 38 passengers aboard. Similar light loads were reported on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED.....

HAMMOND-WHITING INDIANA STATION has an increasing problem with train congestion, reports a frequent user of the station. "So many trains serve the station in the late afternoon--seven trains in one hour on dates the CARDINAL and Valparaiso trains are running that it is impossible to serve them all at one time. There is only one platform, and access to this track is difficult, so that eastbound trains must wait west of the Calumet River Bridge. It is not uncommon for a train to lose 20 minutes waiting for another one to clear Hammond".....

WORST TRAIN REPORTING of the year award goes to the San Gabriel Valley (CA) Daily Tribune, which in its Oct 29 edition ran a red-colored headline which read "Amtrak Train Catches Fire". This was to accompany a report of the SAN DIEGAN which caught fire after hitting debris placed on the tracks by vandals on Oct 28. A sub-headline read "At Least Eight People Hurt on San Diego-Bound Train." The red headline ran across the entire width of the upper front page. But nowhere in the article was there any indication of why the fire started, leaving the reader with the impression that trains can just catch on fire spontaneously, and are therefore dangerous to ride.....

★ ★ ★

A BOMB THREAT was telephoned in to Penn Station, New York, the night of Dec 22, saying a bomb would explode at 12:30am on the 23rd. The bomb scare was called off shortly after 1:00am when no bomb had been located. It was to have exploded in the vicinity of tracks 3 and 4.....

OFFICE OF APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY of the State of California, which was the source of our cover drawing on issue no. 253, was ordered disbanded by Governor-elect Deukmajian at the end of December, its staff being fired and the organization abolished.....

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS should have slumbercoach service, comments a reader. "When the two newly-acquired slumbercoaches are put in place, why not on that route? Amtrak says they will be used to protect existing trains. Presently there are 16 rebuilt 24-8 slumbercoaches plus five rebuild 16-10 cars plus two that I assume will be or have been converted, as they were on the "A" list last winter (cars 2004 and 2006). With slumbercoaches presently assigned to the SILVER METEOR, SILVER STAR, BROADWAY, LAKE SHORE and MONTREALER, there appears to be an excess of these cars, as 16 cars at maximum can cover these trains. That leaves either five or seven spare cars to cover mechanical problems plus the two ex-B&O cars. It seems Amtrak would try to tap the New Orleans-Chicago or Atlanta-Washington markets with slumbercoach service.....

A RAILROAD HANDCAR will be pictured on a U.S. three-cent postage stamp to be issued on Mar 25 in Rochester NY. The stamp, printed in green ink, will be a companion to the recent two-cent steam locomotive stamp, and like it will be issued in coil form. The Postal Service said that the design was taken from a handcar built in the 1880s by Bucyrus Foundry and Manufacturing Co. of Bucyrus, Ohio.....

WESTBOUND SF ZEPHYR on Dec 5 added six Superliner coaches at Sparks NV and boarded about 575 passengers there. An SP engine was added there too.....

THE ORIENT EXPRESS reaches its centennial year in 1983. On Oct 4, 1983 the 100th anniversary of the Venice Simplon ORIENT EXPRESS willbe marked. But the celebrations were starting early, for on Dec 31, 1982 a special party of 150 guests was going to board the train in Paris, in an "adventure of splendor" starting with dinner in Paris, hosted by the American Cancer Society.....

OHIO'S BALLOT MEASURE to adopt a 1% sales tax to build a high-speed rail system in that state failed in November, as it was expected to, the vote being 22.8% yes and 77.2% no. Shortly after the election, Ohio Congressman Wilkowski attempted to have the Ohio Rail Transportation Authority (which would have had authority over the proposed system) dissolved. Here is OARP's report of the event: "In one of the most bizarre moves in the history of the push for high-speed rail passenger service in Ohio, Rep. Arthur Wilkowski (D-Toledo), on Nov 9, abruptly legislated the death of ORTA...! Wilkowski, who labored long and hard to establish ORTA in 1975-76 and who stubbornly insisted in running everything 'his way', introduced H.B. 1051 which would spell the death of ORTA effective Dec 10, 1982, and transferring only a 'token' rail freight and passenger program to Ohio's Dept of Economic and Community Development. Wilkowski's move came quite unexpectedly, with no advance notice to ORTA nor its board members, and had it not been for some alert ORTA staffers and OARP members, Wilkowski's 'railroaded' legislation would have probably succeeded. H.B. 1051 was introduced on the house floor Nov 17. It passed as an emergency measure by a vote of 78 to 13! Sent then to the senate, the bill never made it to a floor vote prior to the adjournment of the senate Nov 19. Thus ORTA was saved; but just barely.....

ORTA ANNOUNCED ON Dec 15 a new federal grant of $100,000 for rail planning in Ohio. Robert J. Casey, ORTA executive director, said the grant will be used for overall state rail planning and rail projects in different state locations which are either underway or projected for the current fiscal year. Casey said the grant is one of several received this year from the Federal RR Administration.....

★ ★ ★

OHIO GOVERNOR-ELECT Richard F. Celeste is favorable to passenger trains, reports OARP; he has indicated that he wants to work closely with ORTA. Former Governor James A. Rhodes was much more interested in highways and trucking.....

THE OHIO ARP is working on a new rail plan for the state, which would require only 21% of the cost of the voter-defeated high-speed rail system ($2.4 billion). Employing Amtrak, state and local funds, it would link all cities of over 30,000 population in the state and connect them to surrounding states. It would include line electrification and upgrading to 110mph speeds on major routes.....

SEVERE WINTER STORM hit the mid-section of the country on Christmas weekend. Denver had three feet of snow--the city's strongest storm since 1885. The Mississippi Valley suffered extreme flooding. The East was unseasonably warm, and ski resorts were without adequate snow. There were many media reports of transportation problems in the Midwest and Rockies, but little or no mention of trains. What happened with Amtrak at that time? The corporation said that there were mainly minor delays, with one exception: the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR was held that weekend to keep it out of the most severe blizzard areas. Train 5 that left Chicago Dec 24 was held for 20 hours at the McCook, Nebraska station, and train 6 that left Oakland Dec 23 was held 20 hours at Denver. These long delays had a "domino effect" on the SFZ's schedule, Amtrak said, and it was several days before operations could return to normal. The Chicago Sun-Times reported that the SFZ being held in Lincoln NE for 10 hours Christmas Day (this does not agree with Amtrak's report) was visited by townspeople bringing food, toys and Christmas cheer. Passengers described the experience as "wonderful". The EMPIRE BUILDER got along quite well. In another heavy storm about Dec 29 in the Minneapolis area, the BUILDER was only about an hour late at St. Paul, while the city had an order out for people to avoid travel because of the heavy snow conditions. The city's airport was closed, a relatively rare occurrence. No Amtrak trains were annulled

during the storm. Due to flooding in Louisiana, the SUNSET LIMITED was forced to detour, losing some time. Early on Dec 30 the Calcasieu River Bridge, five miles east of Lake Charles LA, was badly damaged by flood water, forcing the SUNSET to detour Beaumont TX-Avondale SP Yard on the Missouri Pacific, missing the following stops, which were served by bus: Lake Charles, Lafayette, New Iberia and Schriever. Train 1 of Dec 29 was the last to cross the bridge before it went out. Train 2 of Dec 29 was the first to detour. Jan 6 was the earliest estimated date that the SP bridge could be restored.....

GASOLINE TAX BILL, described last issue, was passed by Congress Dec 23 after a long, bitter battle. The lame-duck Congress then finally adjourned. One of the bills it failed to pass would have transferred ownership of the Alaska Railroad from the Federal DOT to the State of Alaska.....

WALT DISNEY PRODUCTIONS' plan to hire the 4449 steam engine on a tour to publicize the movie "Something Comes of Evil" has fallen thru, according to reports. The company will settle instead on a steam engine from the Eastern part of the nation. As we go to press, we do not have the number of the engine involved.....

CHICAGO WORLD'S FAIR in 1992 has been approved. Miami lost the bid for the fair location for the 500th anniversary of Columbus's discovery of America, but will nevertheless hold a scaled-down international exposition that year. The Olympic Games are in Los Angeles in 1984 and a World's Fair in New Orleans the same year. Sounds like it's time for the SUNSET to start daily operation.....

PUEBLO TEST CENTER was turned over to the AAR on Oct 1.....

News in this issue is updated thru Dec 31, 1982.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"To ensure your journey will be as pleasant and comfortable as possible, an attendant is here to assist you promptly and courteously in every capacity--from the moment of your departure until you arrive at your destination."

--From Amtrak's passenger information folder for the Florida First Class service.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"Opened in May of 1939, (Los Angeles) Union Station from the outside resembles just another big Spanish-style building. But inside, it is a shrine to the golden days of rail travel... The mahogany ticket booths are there, but the cast-brass nameplates of the Union Pacific, Southern Pacific, Northern Pacific, Santa Fe are gone."

--Skip Rozin in New York Times, Nov 14.

(Too southerly a climate for the Northern Pacific.)

CARS & CONSISTS

*SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA, train 15, Oakland Dec 9: engine 242; cars 1215, 2984 "Pine Cavern", 20220, 21872.

*SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, train 6, Martinez Dec 24: engines SP9383, Atk 362 & 367; cars 1171 "Silver Coyote", 1252, 39926, 32032, 32048, 38011, 33024, 31012, 34073, 34101, 34058. Same, train 5, Ogden Dec 4: engines 373, 358; cars 1261, 1237, 39906, 32054, 38030, 33024, 34024, 31012, 34039, 32055, 34096, 32028.

*RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR, D&RGW train 17, Denver Dec 4: engines 5771, 5763, 253 (steam generator), 5762; cars 1230, "Silver Banquet", 1106 "Silver Colt", 1105 "Silver Bronco", 1108, "Silver Pony", 1107 "Silver Mustang", 1145 "Silver Sky."

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 11, San Jose Dec 25: engines SP8492, Atk 236, 229; cars 1161, 39934, 31042, 31026, 34041, 34053, 34052, 39957, 33010, 38016, 32053, 32008.

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CAPITOL LIMITED, train 441, McKeesport PA Nov 24: engine 277; cars 1174, 1242*, 2459 "Pine Dawn"*, 4710*, 25087*, 25086*, 28011. (*Thru Washington-Chicago cars via train 41.)

*PENNSYLVANIAN, train 47, Pittsburgh Nov 27: engine 275; cars 21078, 21145, 20007, 21231.

*LAKE CITIES, train 352, Chicago Nov 20: engine 302; cars 21219, 21123, 21134, 20236.

*INTERNATIONAL, train 364, Chicago Nov 4: engine 319; cars 21219, 21227, Amcafe 20211, 21245, 21025.

*MAPLE LEAF, train 83-365, Toronto Nov 7: engine 347; cars 21162, 21198, Amcafe 20216, 1353 baggage.

*AMBASSADOR, VIA train 75, Toronto Nov 7: engines 6779, 6636; cars "York", 5512, 5611, 2511, 5386, 5394, 3201, 5418.

RAIL FANTRIPS

Feb 5-6: NY-Boston RT, private car "Lehigh Valley 353" on Amtrak 168 & 177. Overnite at Park Plaza Hotel. Candlelit dinner aboard. Limit 20 guests. $210 + hotel optional. David L Ross, 300 Winston Dr #2020, Cliffside Park NJ 07010.

Feb 18-21: L.A.-Las Vegas RT on DESERT WIND with private cars "National Border" & "Vista Pacifica". (Pullman and lounge.) Rio Vista Railways, PO Box 19992, Los Angeles CA 90019.

One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send full info to:
RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

EXPRESS ADS

VIA RAIL CANADA, AMTRAK, EURAIL PASS, 20th CENTURY RAIL TOURS - tickets and reservations - WE KNOW HOW! One call does it all. Pay by credit card or check. Tickets mailed directly to you. Contact GREAT WESTERN TOURS, masters of rail travel, Sheraton Palace Hotel, Suite 900, San Francisco 94105. (415) 398-2994.

DINING CAR CHINA, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal & Pullman items, annual reports. Many railroads. Long 37¢ stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, KS 67213. Will buy items.

HELP TRANSPORT 2000 Saskatchewan fight the Pepin passenger rail cuts in court. Good results to date do not eliminate a desperate need for financial help. To restore key services, especially the SUPER, send your donation today to: Transport 2000 Saskatchewan, Box 3594, Regina, Sask., S4P 3L7, Canada.

SWISS RAIL TOUR, April 15-23, 1983. Write: Rail/Road Tours, Hyde Park Travel Bureau, P.O. Box 24, Hyde Park, MA 02136.

Feb 18-21 Deluxe first class private cars, The Pullman, National Border & Lounge Car, Vista Pacifica, to Las Vegas & return via The Desert Wind. Rio Vista Railways, P.O. Box 19992, Los Angeles, Calif. 90019.

"ISSUES IN AMERICAN RAIL TRAVEL", RTN's little book on important problems with America's rail passenger revival, is almost ready for publication. Price will be $4.50, which includes relevant tax & postage. Full details will be given later in RTN. Rail Travel News, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads $1 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads: only $1.25 per square inch. RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

OCTOBER 1982 FIGURES--SECOND COLUMN IS % INCREASE/(DECREASE) OVER 1981

METROLINERS	87,910	(13.8)
NORTHEAST CORRIDOR CONVENTIONAL	500,421	4.9
NEW ENGLAND METROS	,098	.0
NEW HAVEN-SPRINGFIELD	18,628	(6.7)
NEW YORK-PHILADELPHIA	160,774	(18.5)
PHILADELPHIA-HARRISBURG	64,830	(10.3)
NEW YORK-HARRISBURG	25,006	(.3)
TOTAL NORTHEAST CORRIDOR	857,667	(4.0)
NEW YORK-ALBANY-NIAGARA FALLS	61,973	6.5
CHICAGO-ST.LOUIS	21,078	3.8
CHICAGO-MILWAUKEE	11,228	(5.6)
CHICAGO-DETROIT-TOLEDO	27,487	(7.9)
CHICAGO-CARBONDALE	12,523	(16.7)
CHICAGO-QUINCY	5,850	(9.6)
LOS ANGELES-SAN DIEGO	75,366	(1.8)
SEATTLE-EUGENE	3,580	(45.4)
WASHINGTON-MARTINSBURG	17,302	(15.1)
OAKLAND-BAKERSFIELD	12,584	(7.0)
NEW YORK-MONTREAL	5,974	(.5)
CHICAGO-PORT HURON(TORONTO)	6,942	(7.7)
MINNEAPOLIS-DULUTH	4,962	(44.0)
CHICAGO-VALPARAISO	20,005	1.3
CHICAGO-INDIANAPOLIS	4,376	(12.3)
CHICAGO-KANSAS CITY	9,167	15.1
PHILADELPHIA-PITTSBURGH	7,950	(4.6)
PORTLAND-EUGENE		(100.0)
LOS ANGELES-SACRAMENTO	4,468	312.2
TOTAL SHORT DISTANCE	312,815	(4.1)
WASHINGTON-MONTREAL	9,558	5.6
NEW YORK-FLORIDA	36,849	(13.0)
CHICAGO-NEW YORK/WASHINGTON	21,221	4.5
CHICAGO-CIN-WAS/NEW YORK	5,835	.0
CHICAGO-SEATTLE	28,791	35.6
CHICAGO-OAKLAND(SFO)	24,803	8.3
CHICAGO-LOS ANGELES	21,805	.2
CHICAGO-NEW ORLEANS	12,681	(12.9)
CHICAGO-TEXAS	6,241	33.0
LOS ANGELES-NEW ORLEANS	6,265	(4.0)
LOS ANGELES-SEATTLE	29,843	(11.4)
CHICAGO-NEW YORK/BOSTON	28,964	22.9
BOSTON-NEWPORT NEWS	5,194	(3.1)
NEW YORK-SAVANNAH	9,036	12.6
SEATTLE-SALT LAKE CTY/CHICAGO	9,413	(26.7)
NEW YORK-NEW ORLEANS	17,468	(3.7)
LOS ANGELES/OGDEN-CHICAGO	10,257	(2.8)
TOTAL LONG DISTANCE	284,224	3.2

Amtrak's October ridership figures are published here. The September figures appeared last issue.

The systemwide total was 1,460,051 (compared to 1,501,123 for Oct 1981) and the percentage change was minus 2.7. Special trains numbered 5,345 for a percentage drop of 10.2.

In this first month of Fiscal Year 1983, Amtrak was off to a good start with a drop in ridership of only 2.7% from the previous year. The special Anywhere Fare promotion doubtless contributed highly to the good performance in the face of the still-growing recession. Another factor contributing to better comparisons is the fact that this is the first month that the routes discontinued in Oct 1981 do not appear in the comparison figures, so that the comparison is made from a lower base.

Long distance patronage was actually up --due to the fare promotion, no doubt.

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

80¢

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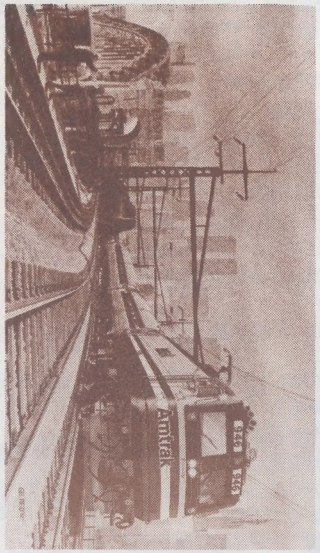

Amtraks' Boston-bound AEM-7 powered New England Metroliner passing the museum-bound GG-1 on the historic Hell Gate Bridge.

Amtrak's 1983 calendar, pictured here, is now available.

This year's calendar features another beautiful painting by artist Gil Reid, from a series done exclusively for Amtrak.

The calendars are $3.50 each. Or you can get 2 for $6.00 and 3 for $8.00. Calendars for 1980, 1981 and 1982 are also available at the same price.

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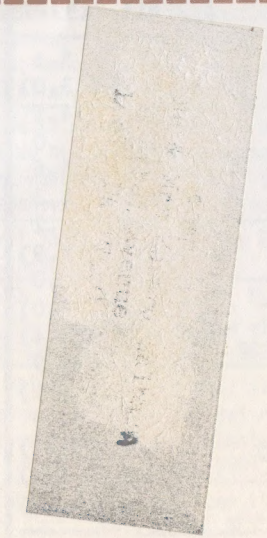

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